

A BUCKET TACKLE SYSTEM**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

5 This application is a continuation-in-part of provisional application Serial No. 60/474,522 filed on May 31, 2003.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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1. Field of the Invention:

 This invention relates generally to fishing rod and tackle carriers and more particularly, the present invention relates to an improved bucket tackle system for organizing, transporting, and
15 storing of fishing rods and reels, lures, and fishing equipment so as to allow for easy access and to prevent them from being damaged and/or destroyed.

20 2. Description of the Prior Art:

 As is generally well-known, the activity of sport or recreational fishing with rods and reels requires the use of a considerable amount of equipment. This is especially true where the
25 line, bait, and hook are cast from the side of a boat into a lake

or stream. The fishing site is usually located some distance from the dock or shore and thus all of the fisherman's gear must be transported from the dock and loaded onto the boat for traveling to the remote fishing site. During this transporting of the fishing rods and reels, they are sometimes laid down and/or fall onto the deck surface of the boat. As a result, these fishing rods and reels, which are relatively quite expensive, may become stepped on and broken or damaged and/or destroyed by the fishermen.

In addition, tackle boxes having multiple compartments have been used by fishermen to sort and store artificial bait and lures, hooks, sinkers, quills, lines and other various fishing implements used in fishing. However, often these fishing implements are tossed around and become mixed up or tangled together during their transportation so as to be not readily accessible during the time of fishing. Further, it is sometimes difficult to remember which one of the multiple compartments in the tackle box had been used for storing a specific lure or the like.

Accordingly, it would be desirable to provide an improved bucket tackle system for organizing, transporting and storing of fishing rods and reels and other fishing equipment which is relatively simple and inexpensive in design, construction, and operation. It would also be expedient that the bucket tackle system

be easily accessible so that the desired fishing implement can be quickly located, but yet prevent them from being damaged and/or destroyed.

5 A prior art search directed to the subject matter of this application in the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office revealed the following Letters Patent and application:

	3,751,845	5,337,892
10	4,845,881	5,634,291
	5,125,183	5,659,995
	5,261,561	6,253,484
	5,303,500	6,254,055
	5,319,877	6,364,150

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In U.S. Patent No. 5,303,500 to Luukonen issued on April 19, 1994, there is disclosed a portable ice fishing device for use by ice fisherman which includes a bucket with a handle, a first tray, a second tray, a third tray, a cover and an apron. The trays
 20 contain a plurality of dividers so as to separate various types of fishing gear. The apron is formed of a body having an upper portion, a lower portion, a ledge, a pocket, and a strap. During use, a plurality of ice fishing rods may be attached to the apron. The handles of the fishing rods are preferably positioned within

the pocket for resting engagement upon the base. The central portion of the fishing rods is then positioned within one of the plurality of grooves during transportation of the ice fishing device.

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In U.S. Patent No. 6,364,150 to Persinger issued on April 2, 2002, there is taught an ice fishing bucket for organizing and transporting ice fishing rods and tackle which includes a bucket member and a removable lid secured to the lip of the bucket member.

10 The lid has a large hole cut in its surface and a foam ring is fitted around the inner periphery of the hole. Slits are cut radially around the inner circumference of the foam ring for securing fishing rods. A foam disk is fitted into the bottom of the bucket member against a bottom wall. The foam disk has holes for
15 receiving the handles ends of the ice fishing rods. To organize the fishing rods, the handle of a rod is placed in one of the holes in the foam disk and the rod is then pushed into the corresponding slit in the foam ring on the bucket lid.

20 In U.S. Patent No. 6,254,055 to Lamberson, Jr. issued on July 3, 2001, there is taught a fishing rod holder insert for holding fishing rods in a five-gallon bucket. The fishing rod insert includes a spaced apart top and bottom plates with a plurality of elongated rods extending between the top and bottom plates for

connecting them together. The top and bottom plates each have a plurality of spaced apart cut-outs along the outer perimeter of the respective plates. In use, the insert is disposed in the bucket and each of the cut-outs are designed to receive a tip-up or jig rod
5 therein for holding the same in a relatively upright position in the bucket.

U. S. Patent No. 6,253,484 issued on July 3, 2001 to O'Connor discloses a fishing rod holder which includes a first leg in direct
10 contact with an inner surface of a bucket and a second leg in direct contact with an outer surface of the bucket. An arm extends from an upper end of the second leg, and a bridge spans a top end of the first leg and the upper end of the second leg. In operation, the first leg and the second leg are slid over the sidewall of the
15 bucket. A fishing pole is placed in the channel defined by the inner sides of the arm and the canted side of the bridge.

The remaining patents, listed above but not specifically discussed, are deemed to be only of general interest and show the
20 state of the art in fishing rod and tackle carriers for organizing, transporting and storing of fishing rods and reels and other fishing equipment.

None of the prior art discussed above disclosed a bucket tackle system like that of the present invention which includes a bucket, a fishing rod and reel insert assembly disposed inside of the bucket, and a cover secured to the open end of the bucket for
5 organizing, transporting and storing fishing rods and reels so as to prevent them from being damaged and/or destroyed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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Accordingly, it is a general object of the present invention to provide an improved buckle tackle system for organizing, transporting and storing of fishing rods and reels and other fishing equipment which is relatively simple and inexpensive in
15 design, construction and operation.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a buckle tackle system for organizing, transporting and storing of fishing rods and reels and other fishing equipment on an efficient and cost
20 effective basis.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a buckle tackle system for organizing, transporting and storing of artificial fishing lures which is easily accessible so that the

desired fishing implement can be quickly located, but yet prevent them from being damaged and/or destroyed.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide
5 a buckle tackle system for organizing, transporting and storing of fishing rods and reels and other fishing equipment which includes a bucket, a fishing rod and reel insert assembly disposed inside of the bucket, and a cover secured to the open end of the bucket.

10 In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is provided a bucket tackle system for organizing, transporting and storing of fishing rods and reels. The bucket tackle system includes a bucket, a fishing rod and reel holder insert assembly, and a cover. The bucket has a closed bottom base and a cylindrical
15 side wall extending upwardly from the closed bottom base and terminating in an open end. The fishing rod and reel holder insert assembly includes a flat disc portion, a plurality of end cap members fixedly secured to the disc portion, and a plurality of hollow tubular members having a first end and a second end.

20 The first end of each of the plurality of tubular members is fixedly secured to a corresponding one of the plurality of end cap members so as to be vertically extending therefrom. The second end of each of the plurality of tubular members is

formed with opposed first and second slots adapted for holding handle portions of the fishing rods and reels. The cover has a plurality of openings which are aligned with the first ends of the plurality of tubular members so that the cover is slidable
5 down over the tubular members and is engageable with the open end of the bucket. The handle portions of the fishing rods and reels are insertable into corresponding ones of the plurality of tubular members and are supported and maintained in a vertical position adjacent to each other, thereby preventing
10 them from becoming damaged and/or destroyed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

15 These and other objects and advantages of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following detailed description when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings with like reference numerals indicating corresponding parts throughout, wherein:

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Figure 1 is a perspective view of a bucket tackle system, constructed in accordance with the principles of the present invention and illustrated in combination with a plurality of fishing rods and reels;

Figure 2 is a side elevational view of the bucket tackle system of Figure 1, but with the fishing rods and reels being removed;

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Figure 3 is an exploded, perspective view of the bucket tackle system of Figure 1;

Figure 4 is an enlarged view of the holder base assembly of
10 the bucket tackle system of Figure 3 in its assembled condition;

Figure 5 is a perspective view of a second embodiment of a bucket tackle system of the present invention, illustrating a plurality of artificial fishing lures;

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Figure 6 is a top plan view of the bucket tackle system of Figure 5;

Figure 7 is a side elevational view of the bucket tackle
20 system of Figure 5, but with the artificial fishing lures being removed;

Figure 8 is a top plan view of the bucket tackle system, taken along the lines 8-8 of Figure 7;

Figure 9 is a perspective view of a third embodiment of a bucket tackle system of the present invention, depicting a variety of accessories being carried on the exterior of the bucket;

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Figure 10 is a top plan view of the bucket tackle system of Figure 9;

Figure 11 is a side elevational view of the bucket tackle
10 system of Figure 9, but with the accessories being removed; and

Figure 12 is a top plan view of the bucket tackle system of Figure 9, taken along the lines 12-12 of Figure 11.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

It is to be distinctly understood at the outset that the present invention shown in the drawings and described in detail in
20 conjunction with the preferred embodiments is not intended to serve as a limitation upon the scope or teachings thereof, but is to be considered merely as an exemplification of the principles of the present invention.

Referring now in detail to the drawings, there is illustrated in Figure 1 a perspective view of a bucket tackle system **10**, constructed in accordance with the principles of the present invention and illustrating in combination a plurality of fishing rods and reels **11**. Figure 2 is a side elevational view of the bucket tackle system **10** of Figure 1, but the fishing rods and reels **11** have been removed. Figure 3 is an exploded, perspective view of the bucket tackle system **10** of Figure 1. Figure 4 is an enlarged view of the holder insert assembly of the bucket tackle system **10** of Figure 1 in its assembled condition.

The bucket tackle system **10** includes a container or bucket **12** which has a generally cylindrical shape for holding a five-gallon or six-gallon capacity. However, it should be understood that various other cross-sectional configurations, such as square, rectangle, oval, and the like may be used as well. The bucket **12** is formed by a circular planar closed bottom base **14** and a circumferential side wall **16** which extends upwardly from the bottom base **14** and terminates in an open end **18** defining a lip portion. The side wall **16** of the bucket is also preferably provided with a bail **20** which has a handle **22**. The ends of the bail **20** are mounted adjacent to the top of the side wall **16** of the bucket **12** so as to allow rotation of the handle **22**.

The bucket **12** has preferably a height dimension of approximately eighteen inches and a diameter dimension of about twelve inches. It should be noted that the shape and the dimensions thereof are supplied for illustrative purposes and may be varied considerably provided that the essential features, function, and attributes of the present invention described herein are not sacrificed. The bucket **12** may be formed of any suitable material, such as plastic, wood, fiberglass, metal and the like as desired by a user. Preferably, the bucket is generally molded of a one-piece construction of plastic material having a thickness of about one-eighth of an inch so as to provide sufficient strength and durability, thereby preventing its damage and/or destruction during its transportation and use.

The bucket tackle system **10** includes a fishing rod and reel holder insert assembly **24** which is comprised of a flat circular disc **26**, a plurality of substantially cup-shaped end cap members **28**, and a plurality of hollow tubular members **30**. The flat circular disc **26** may be formed of any suitable material, such as plastic, wood, fiberglass, metal and the like. The flat disc **26** is preferably made of plywood having a thickness of about three-eighths ($3/8$) of an inch. The diameter of the disc is about ten and one-fourth inches.

Eight equally spaced-apart mounting holes **32** are drilled into the disc **26** about one and one-half inches from its circumference. In other words, the holes **32** are located 45 degrees apart from each other. Each of the end cap members **28** has a bottom wall **34** and a
5 cylindrical side wall **36** extending upwardly from the bottom wall and terminates in an open end **38**. The bottom wall **34** is provided a central opening **40** which is alignable with a corresponding one of the holes **32** in the disc **26**. Each of the end cap members **28** is
10 fixedly mounted via the corresponding ones of the central openings **40** to the disc **26** by suitable mounting means, such as by welding, nuts and bolts, rivets and the like. In the illustrative embodiment, the eight end cap members **28** are held by rivets **42** to the top surface **44** of the disc **26** so as to be arranged in a
circular manner. The end cap members **28** and the tubular members **30**
15 may likewise be formed of any suitable material, such as plastic, wood, fiberglass, metal and the like. The end cap members **28** and the tubular members **30** are preferably made of a polyvinyl chloride (PVC) material. The bottom wall **34** of the end cap member **28** has a diameter of about one and one-half inches and the side wall **26**
20 thereof has a height dimension of about one and one-half inches.

Each of the plurality (eight) tubular members **30** has a length dimension of about twenty inches and a diameter dimension of about one and one-half inches. One end **46** of the tubular members **30** is

telescoped to a corresponding one of the end cap members **28** and secured therein by any adhesive means, such as glue and the like.

The other end **48** of the tubular member **30** is provided with a pair of first and second opposed slots **50,52** for receiving and holding

5 therein a corresponding one of the fishing rods and reels **11**

(Figure 1). The first slot **50** consists of a substantially U-shaped cut-out having a width dimension of about one inch and a height dimension of about two and one-fourth inches. The distance across the top of the first slot **50** is approximately one and three-fourth

10 inches. The second slot **52** consist of a U-shaped cut-out having a width dimension of about one inch and a height dimension of about one inch. The first slot **50** allows the rearward butt of the handle of the fishing rods and reels **11** to be inserted into the tubular members **30**, and the second slot **52** allows the forward grip of the

15 handles thereof a place to come to rest. In this manner, the plurality of fishing rods and reels **11** are supported and maintained in a vertical position adjacent to each other as shown in Figure 1, thereby preventing them from being damaged or destroyed.

20 The bucket tackle system **10** further includes a flat circular cover or lid **54** having a plurality of holes **56** which are aligned vertically with the plurality of tubular members **30** secured in the end cap members **28**. The cover is also provided with a downwardly-extending flange **58**. When the tubular members are slid through the

holes **56** in the cover **54**, the flange **58** can then be snapped over the lip portion of the bucket **12** so as to lock the cover in place. The holes **56** in the cover serve to maintain the plurality of tubular members in a vertical relationship to each other so that they do not contactly engage against each other during transportation and use, thereby preventing noise and/or becoming damaged. The cover **54** is preferably formed of a plastic material. The cover has a diameter dimension of slightly larger than ten and one-fourth inches. The holes **56** are equally spaced-apart from each other and have a diameter of about one and one-half inches so as to receive therethrough the corresponding ones of the tubular members **30**.

In use, the eight end cap members **28** are initially fixedly secured to the circular disc **26**, and the plurality of hollow tubular members **30** with the opposed slots **50,52** formed therein are then fixedly secured in a vertically extending position to the corresponding end cap members **28** so as to form the fishing rod and reel holder insert assembly **24**, as depicted in Figure 4. Next, the holder insert assembly **24** is positioned inside of the bucket **12** and the cover **54** is placed over the vertically extending tubular members **30** so that the holes **56** thereof are aligned with corresponding ones of the tubular member **30**. The cover is slid down over the tubular members and engages with the top lip portion **18** of

the bucket **12**. The flange **58** of the cover **54** is snapped over the lip portion **18** so as to retain it in place. The handle portions of the plurality of fishing rod and reels **11** are inserted via the opposed slots **50,52** into the corresponding tubular members.

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In order to prevent the bucket **12** holding the plurality of fishing rod and reels **11** from tipping over easily, weights may be added to the inside of the bucket **12** and around the tubular members **30**. In the alternative, it will be noted that
10 the end cap members **28** can be fixedly mounted to the inside surface of the bottom base **14** of the bucket **12**, such as by welding, rivets and the like. In this fashion, the circular disc **26** of the holder insert assembly **24** can be eliminated.

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In Figure 5, there is shown a perspective view of a second embodiment of a bucket tackle system **110** of the present invention for holding and storing of a plurality of large artificial fishing lures **112** used especially for Muskier and Northern fishing. Figure 6 is a top plan view of a bucket
20 tackle system of Figure 5. Figure 7 is a side view of the bucket tackle system of Figure 5, with the artificial lures being removed. Figure 8 is a top plan view of the bucket tackle system, taken along the lines 8-8 of Figure 7.

The bucket tackle system **110** includes a container or bucket **111** which has a generally cylindrical shape for holding a five-gallon or six-gallon capacity. However, it should be understood that various other cross-sectional configurations, such as square, rectangle, oval, and the like may be used as well. The bucket **111** is formed by a circular planar closed bottom base **114** and a circumferential side wall **116** which extends upwardly from the bottom base **114** and terminates in an open end **118** defining a lip portion. The side wall **116** of the bucket is also preferably provided with a bail **120** which has a handle **122**. The ends of the bail **120** are mounted adjacent to the top of the side wall **116** of the bucket **111** so as to allow rotation of the handle **122**.

The bucket tackle system **110** has the same shape and dimensions as the bucket **12** illustrated in Figures 1-4. Similarly, the bucket **111** may be formed of any suitable material, such as plastic, wood, fiberglass, metal and the like as desired by a user. Preferably, the bucket **111** is generally molded of a one-piece construction of plastic material having a thickness of about one-eighth of an inch so as to provide sufficient strength and durability.

The lip portion **118** of the bucket tackle system **110** is formed with a plurality of U-shaped slots **124**. Each of the slots **124** is spaced apart from each other about one and one-

half inches. The height dimension of the slots is approximately one inch and the width thereof is about one-fourth inch. The bucket **111** is formed with an outer circumferential ledge portion **126** disposed slightly below the lip portion **118**. A plurality of small holes **128** is formed in the ledge portion **126**. Each of the plurality of artificial lures **112** includes a hook **130** having a tip **132**. The hooks of the artificial lures **112** are insertable between the slots **124** and the tips **132** thereof are received in the associated holes **128** so as to allow the lures to be secured and hanging down from the inside wall of the bucket, without thus being mixed up or tangled together. As a result, the plurality of lures **112** can all be seen at once and the specific lure desired for use can be easily selected and picked up.

The bucket tackle system **110** includes a container or tray **134** which has a size and shape so as to fit on the inside of the side wall **116** and the bottom base **114** of the bucket **111**. The tray **134** is relatively shallow and substantially circular in shape and is preferably made of any suitable material, such as plastic or the like. A plurality of divider walls **136** is used to subdivide the tray **134** into three compartments **138a**, **138b** and **138c**. The larger compartment **138a** serves to accommodate somewhat larger size fishing accessories, such as

extra weights, pliers, scalers, jigging lures, and the like.

The two smaller compartments **138b** and **138c** serve to hold various small items of tackle, such as hooks, sinkers, plugs spools and the like therein. A relatively short, centrally
5 disposed handle member **140** is formed in the central area of the tray. The handle is used to facilitate the insertion and removal of the tray into and out of the tray.

The bucket tackle system **110** further includes a solid,
10 cylindrically-shaped cover or lid **142** which is preferably made of plastic or other suitable materials. The cover **142** is provided with a downwardly-extending flange **144** which is positioned over the lip portion **118** of the bucket **111** so as to close the same, thereby securing therein the artificial lures
15 and other items of tackle. Furthermore, the cover **142** may be used as a seat by the fisherman.

In Figure 9, there is shown a perspective view of a third embodiment of a bucket tackle system **210** of the present
20 invention, which is quite similar to the second embodiment of Figures 5-8. Figure 10 is a top plan view of a bucket tackle system of Figure 9. Figure 11 is a side view of the bucket tackle system of Figure 9, with the artificial lures being

removed. Figure 12 is a top plan view of the bucket tackle system, taken along the lines 12-12 of Figure 11.

The bucket tackle system **210** includes a container or
5 bucket **211** which has a generally cylindrical shape for holding
a five-gallon or six-gallon capacity. However, it should be
understood that various other cross-sectional configurations,
such as square, rectangle, oval, and the like may be used as
well. The bucket **211** is formed by a circular planar closed
10 bottom base **214** and a circumferential side wall **216** which
extends upwardly from the bottom base **214** and terminates in an
open end **218** defining a lip portion.

The lip portion **218** of the bucket tackle system **210** is
15 formed with a plurality of U-shaped slots **224**. The bucket **211**
is formed with an outer circumferential ledge portion **226**
disposed slightly below the lip portion **218**. A plurality of
small holes **228** is formed in the ledge portion **226**. Each of
the plurality of artificial lures **212** includes a hook **230**
20 having a tip **232**. The hooks of the artificial lures **212** are
insertable between the slots **224** and the tips **232** thereof are
received in the associated holes **228** so as to allow the lures
to be secured and hanging down from the inside wall of the
bucket.

The bucket tackle system **210** includes a container or tray **234** which has a size and shape so as to fit on the inside of the side wall **216** and the bottom base **214** of the bucket **211**.

5 The tray **234** is relatively shallow and substantially circular in shape and is preferably made of any suitable material, such as plastic or the like. A plurality of divider walls **236** is used to subdivide the tray **234** into three compartments **238a**, **238b** and **238c**. A relatively short, centrally disposed handle
10 member **240** is formed in the central area of the tray.

The bucket tackle system **210** further includes a solid, cylindrically-shaped cover or lid **242** which is preferably made of plastic or other suitable materials. The cover **242** is
15 provided with a downwardly-extending flange **244** which is positioned over the lip portion **218** of the bucket **211** so as to close the same, thereby securing therein the artificial lures and other items of tackle. Furthermore, the cover **242** may be used as a seat by the fisherman.

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In addition, the bucket tackle system **210** includes a plurality of accessories holders **246** which are fixedly mounted adjacent to the outside surface of the side wall **216** of the bucket **211** by any suitable means such as welding or riveting

or the like. The accessories holders **246** are used to hold various large or lengthy fishing accessories on the exterior of the bucket **211**, which includes, but is not limited to, pliers, fillet knives, jigging lures, trolling weights, scalers and the like. Each of the holders consists of a hollow tubular member having a length of about ten inches and a diameter of about one and one-half inches. Any number of accessories holders **246** may be mounted on the outer side wall of the bucket, such as ten or twelve. On the other hand, a plurality of holders may be mounted all around the outer side wall. The holder may be formed of any suitable material, such as plastic, wood fiberglass, metal and the like. The holders are preferably made of a PVC material.

From the foregoing detailed description, it can thus be seen that the present invention provides a bucket tackle system which includes a bucket, a fishing rod and reel insert assembly disposed inside of the bucket, and a cover secured to the open end of the bucket for organizing, transporting and storing fishing rods and reels. As a result, they are prevented from being damaged and/or destroyed.

While there has been illustrated and described what is at present considered to be a preferred embodiment of the present

invention, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications may be made, and equivalents may be substituted for elements thereof without departing from the true scope of the invention. In addition, many modifications may be
5 made to adapt a particular situation or material to the teachings of the invention without departing from the central scope thereof. Therefore, it is intended that this invention not be limited to the particular embodiment disclosed as the best mode contemplated for carrying out the invention, but that the invention will include all
10 embodiments falling within the scope of the appended claims.